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FIFTH REPORT

OF

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

ON

THE POST OFFICE.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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1859.

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FIFTH REPORT.

To the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury.

My Lords,

I have the honour to present to your Lordships the Fifth Annual Report on the Post Office; being that for the year 1858.

General progress.

Your Lordships will observe with satisfaction that while postal facilities have been much increased, and reductions have been made in the rates of postage on letters between the United Kingdom and several foreign countries, there has been an increase in the Postal Revenue.

Extension of Inland Service.

Number of Post Offices.

Last year the number of Post Offices in the United Kingdom was increased by 134, making the whole present number 11,235; of which 806 are Head Post Offices, and 10,429 Sub-Post Offices.

New Post Offices.

New and more commodious Offices have been opened at Cork, Swansea, Colchester, and Portsmouth.

The Offices at Derby, Dumfries, Brighton, Leeds, Huddersfield, Nottingham and Cambridge have been enlarged and improved; and similar alterations are about to be made in the Offices at Bath, Rugby, Stafford, and Yarmouth.

Speaking of the Liverpool Office, at which sundry improvements have been made, the surveyor of the district says, "Sun-" burners have been introduced; and for a uniform and beautiful " light, and excellent ventilation [the latter being much promoted " by the use of the sun-burner], the Liverpool Sorting Office " stands unequalled."

Two Branch Offices have been established at Bristol, affording great accommodation to portions of the city, and considerable relief to the Chief Office. Should further experience confirm the benefit of this arrangement, I shall consider the expediency of adopting it elsewhere. One important advantage it affords is the means of providing for a large increase of postal business in any town without the erection of a new Chief Office.

New sites, on which it is intended to build offices, have been obtained at Edinburgh, Dundee and Dover; and measures are in progress for providing new or better offices at Canterbury, Lincoln, and Southampton.

A site has also been obtained for the erection of a large new office at Manchester; but, in deference to the wishes of many of the leading inhabitants, it has been determined to ascertain whether it is practicable to procure, on such terms as the case will warrant, a site in substitution for this in another part of the town, which it has been represented would be more convenient to the inhabitants generally.

Receiving Offices, Money Order Offices, and Road Letter Boxes.

With a view of making the amount of postal accommodation in the large towns, by means of Receiving Offices, Money Order Offices, and Road Letter Boxes, sufficient in all cases, and as far as practicable uniformly proportionate to the extent of population and amount of correspondence, a complete revision has been made, which has resulted in a large extension of accommodation, and that without any increase of expense, indeed with a positive saving, owing to a substitution in many cases of Road Letter Boxes for Receiving Houses; always an economical exchange.

When the arrangements consequent upon this revision shall have been completed (and this has now nearly been done), no house in London, unless in some exceptional case, will be more than a quarter of a mile from a Money Order Office, or more than a furlong from either a Receiving Office or a Road Letter Box; and in the neighbourhood of the Royal Exchange, where the greatest number of letters is posted, the maximum distance will be still less.

The augmentation in the number of Road Letter Boxes in London has much increased the facility of posting letters for the Morning Mails; since it is only from these letter boxes that so early a collection as that necessary for this despatch can be made; and the increased facility thus afforded has rendered it practicable to anticipate by one hour the last evening collection from the Receiving Offices, and thus to commence that collection at nine in the evening, instead of ten.

To superadd, as far as practicable, the convenience of a Receiving Office to that of a Road Letter Box, it has been arranged to supply any shopkeeper in the neighbourhood of a letter box, who for the sake of the usual poundage and the increased publicity to his shop may be willing to undertake the trouble, with a supply of Postage Stamps, with printed postal notices for exhibition, and with a copy, for public reference, of the British Postal Guide.

The whole number of additional Road Letter Boxes put up last year was 465; making a present aggregate of 1,168.

Rural Posts.

The general revision of Rural Posts, mentioned in previous Reports, has now been completed, and has resulted in large extensions of these Posts, especially in Ireland; but with lapse of time a necessity has arisen for partial new revisions, and work of the kind, on this smaller scale, will no doubt always be in progress.

Deliveries.

At 1,355 places free deliveries were established for the first time last year, and at 454 other places, including York, Carlisle, and Preston, the free delivery was extended or otherwise improved.

Posting letters during the night.

The arrangement, mentioned in the last Report, for enabling the public to post letters during the night at all Post Offices where there is night duty, having been found to work satisfactorily in England and Wales, has been extended to Scotland and Ireland.

London Districts.

Although it has not yet been practicable, owing to difficulties of various kinds, to provide in every London District a suitable building for a permanent Chief Post Office, yet every District not so furnished has been supplied at least with a temporary office. An interchange of bags is now, therefore, made between all the Districts; and greater rapidity of communication between house and house, which formed a chief object of the division of London into Postal Districts, will, I hope, be soon fully attained.

As regards the town portions of the Districts, in every case (provided they bear the District initials) the letters posted at a Receiving Office or Road Letter Box for the same District are at once selected at the District Office for delivery; and the process will soon be further accelerated, so as to reduce almost to a minimum the time between the posting and delivery of a letter properly addressed.

Much has been done in carrying forward the postal improvements which have for some time been in progress in the towns and villages round London; though, owing to the vast amount of detail, much still remains to be done. New Sorting Offices have been opened, from which the letter carriers work with more facility and expedition; in many instances the times for posting have been extended; new deliveries and collections have been established; and the intervals between the despatches from London have been made more equal.

That the public have largely availed themselves of the increased facility of postal communication in the London District consequent on the recent improvements is shown by the great increase in the number of district letters. During the ten years previous to 1857, when the improvements effected, though continuous and important, were comparatively small, the annual rate of increase was somewhat less than a million and a half; while during the last two years the increase has been as follows:—

	Increase of Letters during the Year.
In 1857 - - - - - -	4,239,000
In 1858 - - - -	6,270,000

and since the commencement of 1859 the rate of increase has been still higher.

The augmentation of this class of letters during the last two years has thus afforded an increase of about 48,000*l.* per annum in the gross revenue.

I feel pleasure in noticing the extensive compliance by the public with the wishes of the Department that the addresses of letters to London or its neighbourhood should include the initials of the Postal District in which they are to be delivered; and in its desire that when, as in the London Receiving Offices, there are two separate letter boxes for different classes of letters, care should be taken, in posting, to drop the letters into the right box.

By readiness of this kind on the part of the public to co-operate with the Department, the sorting, despatch, and ultimately the delivery of letters are much expedited.

At all the newly erected District Offices, and at all the other new Sorting Offices, arrangements have been made for providing the letter carriers with much better accommodation than formerly; and the sanitary state of many of the old offices has been improved.

Street nomenclature and numbering of houses.

Some further progress has been made in improving the nomenclature of the streets in London and the numbering of houses; but the main work has still to be accomplished.

More frequent communications.

During the last year fourteen additional towns were provided with Day Mails to or from the metropolis of one or other of the three parts of the United Kingdom, and some of them with Mails in both directions; and arrangements were made, which commenced on the 1st January of the present year, for giving, for the first time, the advantage of a Day Mail to several towns in the South-west of England, including Plymouth and Devonport, and for accelerating the existing Day Mail from London to that district.

Supplementary Day Mails, moreover, were established with Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, and Epsom.

While, however, I have had the pleasure of providing all these additional Mails, I have been compelled, with regret, to withdraw the Day Mail to Enniskillen and some other towns in that part of Ireland, owing to the unwillingness of the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway Company to continue the service for a payment which was the utmost that the limited amount of correspondence would warrant me in expending.

By an extension of the Parcel Post Service, and by other arrangements, more frequent postal communication has also been provided between many provincial towns.

More frequent Mails are now despatched to the Channel Islands, and some of the deliveries there have been improved.

Accelerations and increased punctuality.

Many of the Mails last year, besides those on the Great Western Railway, already referred to, were accelerated; but the most important acceleration for which arrangements were made did not come into operation till the 1st February in the present year.

The latter measure is the result of a proposal made by the department more than three years ago to the London and North Western, the Lancaster and Carlisle, and the Caledonian Railway Companies; the proposal being that, to ensure a more punctual working of the Night Mail trains to and from the north, and at the same time to admit of an acceleration of those trains, the passenger and parcel traffic conveyed by them should either altogether cease or be strictly limited. After much negotiation, the three Companies assented, in July last, to the limitation; and at the same time undertook to effect a material acceleration.

Apart from the more regular working of the trains (an advantage extending to the whole country), a special benefit has accrued to Scotland, particularly to Edinburgh and Glasgow, where since the 1st February 1859 the London Night Mail has arrived in time for the letters to be delivered at 8 o'clock the next morning, and where there is a later despatch, by nearly two hours, of the return Mail. The benefit, however, is participated in by all towns further northward; as these towns have now an earlier arrival of the London Mail by more than an hour and a half, and a later despatch to an extent varying from an hour and a half to nearly three hours.

Much credit is due to Mr. Edward Page, Inspector-General of Mails, to the Inspectors of Mails, and to the other officers by whom this important measure has been carried into effect, for their great and successful exertions.

Unforeseen difficulties arose in completing the contract which was long pending for a great improvement in the postal service between London and Dublin; but by much labour and perseverance these difficulties have been removed, and the contract formally ratified. As time will be required, however, for building the powerful steam packets necessary for the service, the new arrangements will not commence till the middle of next year.

Applications for increased postal accommodation.

Applications are frequently made for the establishment of an additional Post Office, or of an additional mail, or for the acceleration of a mail, which I am unable to comply with. Except in special cases the rule in such matters is not to grant the application unless it appears on inquiry either that the existing amount of correspondence gives a fair claim to the alteration, or that the improvement will probably lead to such an increase of correspondence as to make good the additional expense. And this rule seems to me the only one which is just to the public at large; since increased postal accommodation can only be afforded by an expenditure of the public money.

It is sometimes urged that the particular correspondence concerned is of unusual importance, as, for instance, that it relates to large commercial transactions; but it is obviously impossible for the Department to investigate such statements, and to judge between the comparative value of different classes of letters. A

letter from the smallest village relating to a matter of life or death may be as important as one from a large town containing a great mercantile order; but to provide in either case beyond the expense warranted by the amount of postage would be to tax the country at large for the benefit of a few.

By paying the difference, however, between the sum which the Department considers itself warranted in expending, and the actual cost of the service, it is always open to those persons to whom any particular branch of correspondence is important to obtain the improvement they desire; and as respects additional post offices, at least, this arrangement is not unfrequently adopted.

General contracts with railway companies.

General contracts, giving the Department the use of all the trains, have been made with the Great Western and Bristol and Exeter Railway Companies; making the whole number of such contracts now in force fourteen.

Multiplicity of arrangements often necessary for conveyance of letters.

The great number of arrangements still necessary for the conveyance of letters to long distances, notwithstanding the length of many of the railways for which a single contract suffices, is shown by the fact, that for the transmission of a letter from Land's End to John O'Groat's,—exclusive of engagements with rural messengers, and of arrangements for the conveyance of Mail Bags between railway stations and Post Offices,—twenty-one separate contracts are required.

Travelling Post Offices.

Numerous alterations have been made in the construction and interior fittings of the travelling Post Offices on the railways, with a view to the greater security from injury of the officers employed. The ventilation, too, of these carriages. has been improved.

Apparatus for transferring Mails.

Extended use has been made of the apparatus for exchanging Mail Bags without stopping the trains; and an improvement of this apparatus, devised by Mr. Pearson Hill, a clerk of the Department, by which larger mails than formerly can with safety be exchanged, having proved successful in a trial on the South-eastern railway, will shortly be brought into use elsewhere.

Another useful invention has been made by Mr. Dicker, supervisor of the Mail Bag apparatus; viz., a signal lamp affixed to the apparatus standards, for notifying to the guards in the Post Office carriage the due setting of the apparatus at the railway station.

Distance that Mails are now carried; with cost of conveyance.

It will be seen, by the subjoined Table, that the distance over which Mails are now conveyed within the United Kingdom by railways, mail coaches, &c., steam packets, boats, and foot messengers is about 133,000 miles per day, being about 3,000 miles more than at the end of 1857. This increase is principally in railway conveyance; but it will be observed that nearly as much duty is still performed by coaches and mail carts as by railways.

1858.*

—	Mails conveyed by Railways.				Mails conveyed by Coaches, Omnibuses, Mail Carts, &c.			
	Number of Miles per Week Day.	Average Charge per Mile.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Number of Miles per Week Day.	Average Charge per Mile.	Maximum.	Minimum.
		s. *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*d.*		*d.*	*s.* *d.*	
England - -	25,142	0 $7\frac{3}{4}$†	3 0†	$\frac{1}{8}$	18,332	$2\frac{1}{2}$	0 9	Exemption from Tolls.
Ireland - -	2,805	1 $3\frac{1}{2}$	4 1	$\frac{1}{4}$	8,773	2	0 8	*d.* $\frac{1}{8}$
Scotland -	4,516	0 $9\frac{1}{4}$	3 2	$\frac{1}{2}$	4,844	$2\frac{1}{4}$	0 $6\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$
United Kingdom	32,463	0 $8\frac{1}{2}$	4 1	$\frac{1}{8}$	31,949	$2\frac{1}{2}$	0 9	Exemption from Tolls.

(*continued*)

—	Mails conveyed on Foot.				Mails conveyed by Packets and Boats between different Places in the United Kingdom.			
	Number of Miles per Week Day.	Average Charge per Mile.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Number of Miles per Week Day.	Average Charge per Mile.	Maximum.	Minimum.
		d.	*d.*	*d.*		*s.* *d.*	*s.* *d.*	*d.*
England - -	47,955	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{8}$	1,132	1 $6\frac{3}{4}$	5 $6\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{5}{8}$
Ireland - -	7,267	1	$2\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	24	0 $1\frac{3}{4}$	0 $5\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$
Scotland -	10,490	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$4\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	1,513	0 $3\frac{1}{4}$	1 $10\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
United Kingdom	65,712	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	2,669	0 $9\frac{3}{4}$	5 $6\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{2}$

Number of Letters, Newspapers, and Books.

Number of Letters.

The following Table shows the number of letters delivered in the United Kingdom during the last year, with the rate of increase, and the proportion of letters to population ‡ :—

* The Account was taken on the 1st December.

† In calculating these amounts, the payment to the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company has been omitted, as only part of that payment is for postal service, the remainder being of the nature of a Government grant to increase the general facilities for communication with Ireland.

‡ This Table is to some extent an estimate, being the result of a calculation founded on a record of the actual number of letters delivered in one week of each quarter in the year. At page 27 in the Appendix will be found a statement of the estimated number of letters in each year since 1838; and at pages 28 and 29 an estimate of the number of newspapers and books during each of the last three years.

	Number of Letters in 1858.	Increase per Cent.* on Number in 1857.	Proportion of Letters to Population.
England - - - -	428 millions	About $4\frac{1}{4}$	22 to each person.†
Ireland - - - -	44 „	„ $3\frac{1}{4}$	7 „
Scotland - - - -	51 „	„ $1\frac{1}{2}$ (Decrease.)	16 „
United Kingdom - -	523 „	„ $3\frac{3}{4}$	18 „

As compared with 1857, the total shows an increase of 19 millions; and as compared with the year previous to the introduction of Penny Postage (1839) an increase (omitting franks) of 447 millions; making the present number of letters nearly sevenfold what it was in 1839.

During the last five years the rate of increase, as compared in each instance with the number in the preceding year, has been as follows:—

1854 - - - -	8 per Cent.
1855 - - - -	$2\frac{3}{4}$ „
1856 - - - -	$4\frac{3}{4}$ „
1857 - - - - -	$5\frac{1}{2}$ „
1858 - - - - -	$3\frac{3}{4}$ „
Average nearly - -	5 „

Letters in London.

Of the whole number of letters last year, nearly a quarter were delivered in London and the suburban district; and, counting those also which were despatched, nearly one half passed through the London Office.

Colonial and foreign letters.

The numbers of letters given in the foregoing statements include colonial and foreign letters delivered in the United Kingdom, as well as inland letters. The great bulk, however, are inland; the colonial and foreign forming less than one fiftieth of the whole number delivered.

Registered letters.

The number of registered letters last year was nearly 1,300,000; or one registered letter to about 400 ordinary letters.

Newspapers.

The number of newspapers delivered in the United Kingdom last year was about the same as in each of the two previous years, namely, about 71,000,000.

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* The rate of increase is calculated from the numbers given with greater minuteness in the Table at page 27.

† In Glasgow the proportion is as high as 24 letters to each person, in Liverpool 26, in Birmingham 28, in Manchester 30, in Dublin 33, in Edinburgh 34, and in London 46.

The remark still holds good that the proportion of newspapers and books sent through the post between this country and places abroad is much greater than that of letters; for while of letters the portion, as already stated, is less than one-fiftieth of the whole, of newspapers and books it is about one-sixteenth.*

As already explained in a previous Report, this difference is probably owing, in part, to the means by which large numbers of inland newspapers and books are distributed otherwise than through the post, not being available for newspapers and books sent here from abroad, and to the rates of postage on colonial and foreign letters being much higher, compared with newspapers, than is the case with inland letters.

This great disparity in the rates of postage gives rise to petty fraud in using foreign and colonial newspapers for letter writing.

Returned letters.

The number of letters returned to the writers last year, owing to the failure in the attempts to deliver them, was about 1,700,000; being the same within 8,000 as in the previous year. This is equal to about 1 in 300 of the whole number.

Returned newspapers.

Owing to the same cause, about 570,000 newspapers also were undelivered; being 1 in 124 of the whole number.

Books.

There were about 7,250,000 of book packets last year; being an increase of more than one-fifth on the previous year; still, however, owing to the great decrease of newspapers sent by post since the abolition of the compulsory stamp, the total weight of the Mails is probably less now than it was four years ago.

Average postage of a letter, and a book packet.

The average postage of an ordinary inland letter continues to be about $1\frac{1}{8}d.$; and the average postage of a book packet about $2\frac{1}{4}d.$

Average weight of a letter.

Excluding official packets, the average weight of an inland letter continues to be rather more than a quarter of an ounce; that of a colonial letter rather more than one-third of an ounce; and that of a foreign letter about a quarter of an ounce.

Average weight of a newspaper.

The average weight of an inland newspaper passing through the Post Office is about two ounces and a half; that of a colonial newspaper nearly two ounces; that of a foreign newspaper rather more than an ounce; and the average weight of a book packet continues to be about five ounces and a half.

More than 97 per cent. of the inland letters are now enclosed in envelopes, and nearly 70 per cent. of letters from abroad.

Money Orders.

Money Order Offices.

During the last year 127 new Money Order Offices were opened, viz., 104 in England and Wales, 14 in Ireland, and 9 in Scotland; making the whole number 2,360, exclusive of two Colonial Money Order Offices in connexion with the United Kingdom.

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* In the last Report this portion was stated to be one-fifth; but in making the calculation newspapers bearing the impressed stamp were by mistake omitted.

Number of Money Orders, &c.

The following Tables show the number of Money Orders issued during the year, with other particulars.*

—	Number of Money Orders issued.	Amount.	Increase per Cent.	Commission.	Profit after deducting Expenses.	Proportion of Money Orders issued to Population.
		£		£		
England and Wales	5,674,441	10,821,901	4	94,858	25,110	Nearly 1 to every 3 persons
Ireland - -	485,220	857,558	4½	7,916	Loss 750	1 „ 13 „
Scotland - -	529,735	982,646	3½	8,817	1,576	1 „ 6 „
United Kingdom -	6,689,396	12,662,105	4	111,591	25,936	1 „ 4 „

Annual Increase in the Total Amount for which Money Orders were issued in the last five years, as compared in each case with the Amount in the year preceding.

Year.	England and Wales.	Ireland.	Scotland.	United Kingdom.
1854	About 5½ per cent. increase.	About 4½ per cent. increase.	About 8¼ per cent. increase.	About 5½ per cent. increase.
1855	„ 5	„ 9	„ 4½	„ 5¼
1856	„ 7½	„ 7	„ 5½	„ 7¼
1857	„ 3	„ 1½	„ 5¾	„ 3¼
1858	„ 4	„ 4¾	„ 3¼	„ 4
Average increase	5	5¼	5½	5

Profit.

Total Profit in each of the last ten years:—

	Profit. £
1849	322
1850	3,236
1851	7,437
1852	10,689
1853	14,149
1854	16,167
1855	20,252
1856	22,674
1857	24,175
1858	25,936

Increase in Money Order business.

It will be seen by the foregoing Tables that the increase in the number of Money Orders last year (about 4 per cent.) is greater than that in 1857, though less than the average of the last five years; that the greatest increase was in Ireland, and the least in

* At pages 30 and 31 in the Appendix is a statement of the Money Orders issued and paid in each year since 1839.

Scotland; also, that the Money Order system, though now productive of a large profit in England and Scotland, is still carried on at a loss in Ireland; this last result being attributable in part to the larger proportion there of Money Orders for small sums; a class of Orders, which, as stated in a previous Report, does not defray its cost.

Ireland.

The year's accounts again furnish evidence of increased means in Ireland of obtaining remunerative labour; the number of Money Orders issued in Ireland and payable in England having increased much more than the number issued in England and payable in Ireland. The average value, moreover, of each of the first class of Orders is the greatest.

Gibraltar and Malta.

There has, for some time, been a provision both at Gibraltar and Malta for making remittances to this country by means of Money Orders; and our troops there seem to avail themselves of the arrangement to a considerable extent; about five Orders daily being issued at each place, notwithstanding the commission is rather high, being 9*d.* for sums not exceeding £2, and 1*s.* 6*d.* for sums between £2 and £5.

Money Orders at principal towns.

At page 32 in the Appendix, is given the amount of Money Orders issued and paid last year at some of the principal towns.

Void orders.

The void Orders last year, viz., those which lapsed to the Revenue owing to non-application for payment, amounted to £1,902, viz., in England and Wales £1,517, in Ireland to £203, and in Scotland to £182.

In proportion to the whole amount of Orders in the three countries, the greatest number of void Orders was in Ireland, and the least in England.

The proceeds of the void Orders are always carried to the fund for assisting the Officers of the Department to insure their lives; indeed, this fund is formed exclusively of the proceeds of these Orders and of unclaimed property found in dead letters.

Colonial Posts.

Australian Mails.

The European and Australian Royal Mail Company, which for some time conveyed the Mails between this country and Australia, but which performed the service very ill and incurred heavy penalties for overtime on the voyages and other irregularities, has been permitted to terminate its contract. The service (which hitherto has always been in an unsatisfactory state) is now undertaken by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company; and I trust that it will be executed with vigour and punctuality, the best guarantee for which is the excellent manner in which this Company has performed its other postal services, together with the peculiar advantages which it possesses for the service in question.

Transit through Egypt.

By the completion of the railway between Alexandria and Suez, and under the provisions of a new agreement with the Pacha, the Mails are now conveyed through Egypt with much greater expedition than formerly; and the transit has been

further expedited by an arrangement with the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, under which the packet containing the heavy part of each Mail, namely, that from Southampton, will arrive at Alexandria a day earlier than the packet from Marseilles; so as to allow of the passengers, goods, and Mails brought by the first packet being carried on to Suez before the swifter Mail arrives. A provision similar in principle has been made for the return Mails.

In accomplishing these objects, and in effecting various improvements in the Post Offices at Alexandria, Suez, Malta, and Gibraltar, much valuable aid was afforded by Mr. Anthony Trollope, one of the surveyors, who, for these purposes, was sent on a special mission to the Mediterranean, and who is now rendering important service of a similar kind in the West Indies.

Cape of Good Hope.

The contract with the Union Steam Shipping Company for the conveyance of a monthly Mail to the Cape of Good Hope (referred to in the last Report), has been definitively settled, and the Company is performing the service in a very creditable manner.

Newfoundland.

The Government of Newfoundland has concluded a contract with the Atlantic Royal Mail Steam Navigation Company for the conveyance of Mails, once a month, between Galway and St. John's.

Canada.

In consequence of the difficulties attending the land conveyance between Halifax and Quebec, all letters for Canada are now forwarded either direct by Canadian Mail Packets or through the United States.

Registration.

The means of complete registration from the place of posting to that of delivery have been extended to letters addressed to New South Wales, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Bermuda.

Sorting on board ship.

The arrangements for sorting letters on board ship, hitherto confined to the Australian Mails, having been found to work well, and greatly to expedite the delivery of the letters, have been extended, within the present month, to the Indian Mails; and I am in communication with the Postmasters-General of the United States and Canada, with a view to the adoption of the same plan in the packets between this country and North America.

English postage stamps.

It having been found that the use of English postage stamps at Malta, Gibraltar, and Constantinople led to no forgery, the privilege has been extended to the British West Indies, and to the Foreign ports touched at by the Mail Packets on the Western Coast of Africa. It is obvious, that such an arrangement is applicable only when the whole of the postage belongs to the British Post Office.

New Post Office at Gibraltar.

The new Post Office at Gibraltar, mentioned in the last Report as in the course of erection, has been completed and opened to the public.

Foreign Posts.

Postal Treaty with Spain.

I have had the pleasure of bringing to completion the Postal Treaty with Spain referred to in previous Reports, and which had been long in hand. For this success I am indebted, in part, to the exertions of Mr. Edward Rea, whom I despatched to Madrid to render assistance to our ambassador there, Lord Howden, who expressed, in strong terms, his satisfaction with Mr. Rea's proceedings.

Under the new Treaty, the postage of letters has been much reduced, registration is provided, and a book post established.

The benefits of the Treaty extend to the Balearic and Canary Islands, and I hope they will soon include Cuba and Porto Rico.

Portugal and Madeira.

With the zealous aid also of Mr. Howard, British Minister at Lisbon, assisted likewise by Mr. Rea, I have concluded a new Treaty with Portugal, including, as in the case of Spain, a large reduction of postage, and the establishment of a book post; and, as soon as practicable after the Treaty shall have been ratified by the Cortes, the measure will come into operation.

The very heavy postage of letters to Portugal and Madeira (which latter place will partake of the advantages of the new Convention), and which have remained with little alteration since 1808, have led to repeated and just complaints from our merchants and the relatives of the many invalids who resort for health to Madeira; but all past efforts to effect a remedy had been fruitless. It is, therefore, with peculiar satisfaction that I have brought this long protracted negotiation to a successful issue.

South and Central America.

Proposals for new Postal Conventions, including a large reduction of postage and the establishment of a book post have been sent to Brazil, Chili, Peru, Mexico, and all the other States in South and Central America where there appeared any hope of a successful result; and measures have been taken for ascertaining whether at other places in that part of the world reductions in British postage could safely be made; the danger to guard against being the retention or imposition of a heavy local charge which would almost—possibly altogether—neutralize the effect of our reduction.

At Buenos Ayres and the other parts of the Argentine Republic, and in Hayti, the alterations have already been adopted and carried into effect; as also, with the exception of the book post, in Paraguay. On the 1st August, similar improvements will be made in the postal arrangements with Nicaragua, (with which State a postal treaty has just been concluded,) and probably with the Mosquitos and some other parts of Central America.

A low rate of postage has also been established between this country and Martinique, Guadaloupe, Curaçoa, and the foreign settlements on the Western Coast of Africa; with which latter there is now also a book post.

German Postal Union and United States.

The negotiations for a new Convention with the German Postal Union proceed very slowly, and those with the United

States make no progress whatever, notwithstanding our proposal made more than two years ago to the United States Post Office for a large reduction in postage and for the establishment of a book post.

Holland and Tuscany.

Progress, however, has been made towards a new Postal Treaty with Holland; and like negotiations have been entered into with Tuscany.

Brazilian and Argentine Mail Service.

The Brazilian and Argentine Mail Service has been much improved by increased speed in the packets; an alteration which has greatly shortened the course of post, by securing the arrival in England of the homeward packet a few days before the departure of the outward packet.

Continental Mails.

I have not yet been able to effect an improvement in the important Mails between London and Paris, and between London and Ostend, for which the necessary negotiations are still pending. I hope that ultimately all these Mails will be accelerated, that the hours of despatch and arrival will be improved, and that the night service to Ostend will be exchanged for a day service.

Revenue and Expenditure.

Gross Revenue.

Gross Revenue.

The Gross Revenue of the Post Office in each of the years 1857 and 1858 was as follows*:—

Postage.

	1857. £		1858. £	
England - - -	2,437,053		2,475,961	
Ireland - - -	219,899		226,458	
Scotland - - -	271,906		273,520	
		2,928,858†		2,975,939†

Commission on Money Orders.

England - - -	90,806		94,850	
Ireland - - -	7,586		7,960	
Scotland - - -	8,463		8,786	
		106,855		111,596‡
		£ 3,035,713		£ 3,087,535

* At page 33 in the Appendix a statement is given of the Revenue and Expenditure since 1836; also (at page 34) a statement, for the last two years, of the amount of postage collected at many large towns.

† Exclusive of "returns" for refused letters, &c.

‡ This is the sum actually brought to account of revenue, and consequently slightly different from that stated at page 16, which shows the amount of commission on the orders *issued* during the year.

The Gross Revenue properly appertaining to the year 1858, adjusted chiefly with reference to the balances due from and to the Colonies and foreign countries was 3,100,939*l.*; being an increase of 82,792*l.* on the adjusted Gross Revenue of 1857. This increase is equal to nearly $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., as compared with an increase of nearly 5 per cent. in the previous year, and with an average of about $4\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in the last three years.

Expenditure.

The following Table gives both the actual expenditure of the Post Office during the years 1857 and 1858, and the expenditure properly appertaining to those years:— Expenditure

Actual Expenditure.		Heads of Service.	Expenditure properly appertaining to the year (partly estimated).	
1857.	1858.		1857.	1858.
£	£		£	£
948,573	983,830	Salaries, Pensions, &c. - -	948,573	983,830
1,573	—	Hereditary Pensions - -	—	—
29,367	78,433	Buildings, Repairs, &c. -	29,367	27,015
		Conveyance of Mails.		
422,943	545,073	By Railways - - -	420,000	441,000
167,823	165,703	„ Coaches, Carts, &c., and Wages of Mail Guards -	165,000	165,703
12,298	4,507	„ Mail Packets and Private Ships (when paid for by the Post Office) - - -	12,298	4,507
28,566	23,852	Manufacture of Postage Stamps	28,566	23,852
109,672	124,647	Miscellaneous, including the conveyance of Mails in Colonies, under the postal direction of the Postmaster-General; the conveyance of the Mails through Egypt; Clothing for Letter Carriers and Guards; Official Postage, Rents, Taxes, Law Expenses, &c. - - -	109,672	124,647
£1,720,815	£1,926,045	Totals - -	£1,713,476	£1,770,554

The increase of expenditure properly appertaining to the year was rather more than 3 per cent., as compared with $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in 1857, and with $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. the average of the last three years.

The increase of 35,000*l.* in salaries, pensions, &c., is partly for an increased force of 641 officers, partly for poundage on Money Orders and Postage Stamps (which increases with increasing business), and partly for annual increments of salaries and wages.

The decrease under the head of conveyance of Mails by packet boats and private ships is owing to the cessation of the payment by the Post Office for certain temporary Australian packets.

The packet service is for the most part under the superintendence of the Admiralty, and is borne on the expenditure of that Department, many of the contracts for this service having been entered into with other objects, besides those of postal communication. Indeed, as postal enterprises, few of them could be maintained, the expense, in the large majority of cases, far exceeding the earnings.

The omission in the expenditure of the Post Office of such portion of the cost of these packets as may be fairly chargeable to this Department, is in part counterbalanced by the omission (under the head of Revenue) of the charge for transmission (inland) of stamped newspapers, amounting last year to upwards of 154,000*l.*

Net Revenue.

Net Revenue.

The Net Revenue, taken as the difference between the Gross Revenue and Expenditure properly appertaining to the year, was as follows :—

1857.	1858.	Increase.
£	£	£
1,304,671	1,330,385	25,714

This increase is at the rate of nearly 2 per cent., as compared with $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in 1857, and $5\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. in the last three years.

Staff of Officers.

Number of Officers.

At the end of 1858 the Staff of Officers was as follows, as compared with the staff at the end of 1857 :—

On 31st Dec. 1857.			On 31st Dec. 1858.	
		1. Officers in British Isles:—		
	1	Postmaster-General - -	1	
	5	Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, and Secretaries for Ireland and Scotland - - - -	5	
	15	Surveyors - - -	15	
	19	Other Superior Officers; viz., Heads of Departments, Chief Clerks in the Metropolitan Offices, &c. -	18	
	11,101	Postmasters - - -	11,235	
	1,610	Clerks, &c. - - - -	1,632*	
	205	Guards - - -	197	
	10,582	Letter Carriers, Messengers, &c. -	11,076	
	7	Marine Mail Officers - -	7	
23,545				24,186
	125	2. Postmasters, Clerks, Letter Carriers, &c. in the Colonies, the Posts of which are under the direction of the Postmaster-General - - -	125	
125				125
	61	3. Agents in Foreign Countries for collection of Postage, &c. -	61	
61				61
23,731				24,372

The portion of the above staff attached to the Chief Office in London, which is less than it was, owing to the removal of many men to the District Offices, now consists of about 1,700 officers. Including this number, about 3,300 belong to the London District.

It will be seen by Dr. Lewis's Report in the Appendix, page 35, that the health of the large body of officers attached to the General Post Office in London, has been good; showing improvement even on the satisfactory state in the previous year. Medical Report.

The general conduct of the officers of the department during the last year has also been good, indeed that of many has been excellent; and, under the system of promotion according to merit, which has now for some years been in operation, I have had the pleasure of advancing many zealous and efficient men. Conduct of Officers.

During part of the year, indeed, there was some misconduct among the London letter carriers, but it was confined to comparatively few. The wrong-doing of these few did not deter me from entering into a full examination of the complaints; and being satisfied that while the alterations in the London letter carriers.

* This number is exclusive of persons whose time is partially occupied in the service of the Department, as clerks or otherwise, but who are not regularly appointed officers, being engaged at the discretion of the Postmasters, to whom an allowance is made for that purpose.

scales of wages made some time since on the recommendation of the Committee appointed by your Lordships' predecessors had, on the whole, been beneficial, they had in some instances pressed rather hard, or at any rate had left some grievances unremoved, I advised those modifications which you were pleased to sanction. These alterations have considerably improved the condition of a large body of letter carriers, and have, I trust, rendered every industrious and well-conducted letter carrier fully contented.

For fuller information on this subject, I refer to two orders issued at the time, and reprinted in the Appendix, pages 40, 41.

Miscellaneous.

Postal Official Circular and Daily Packet List.

In order to facilitate the supply of early postal information to the public, arrangements have been made for recasting the matter in the Daily Packet List (a publication which, henceforward, will bear the title of "Postal Official Circular and Daily Packet List,") and for publishing a weekly number; the latter to include a notice of every postal alteration, such as reductions in foreign postage, and so forth, even when the notice has previously appeared in the daily edition.

By purchasing the daily edition of the Postal Official Circular, and the quarterly edition of the British Postal Guide, any person may always be in possession of the earliest and fullest information regarding the rates of postage to all parts of the world, the times at which the various mails are despatched, and all other postal matters which concern the public at large; and this object may, in great measure, be attained by the purchase of the British Postal Guide and the *weekly* edition of the Postal Official Circular.*

Prepayment of inland postage.

In the full hope of advantage, both to the public and the Department, from rendering compulsory, to the extent of one rate, the prepayment of inland letters, I issued, with the consent of your Lordships, an order to that effect; but, as you are aware, much repugnance was manifested towards the arrangement; and, regarding it as one in which the public were chiefly concerned, I did not hesitate, on observing this manifestation, without any counter movement, to recommend that the order should be withdrawn; a course in which you were pleased to concur.

When the plan came into operation, some cases of difficulty certainly arose which had not been foreseen, and which scarcely

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* The "Postal Official Circular and Daily Packet List" is published, and sent post free, by Mr. Shanly, 7, Red Cross-square, London, E.C., at the following charges, payable in advance :—

Daily Edition	- - -	20*s.* per annum.
Weekly or Saturday ditto	- -	5*s.* ditto.
Single Numbers	- - -	1½*d.* each.

anything but positive experience could have brought to light. I have little doubt, however, that by patient effort means would have been found for surmounting these difficulties, and that after a time the measure would have been viewed with general favour. Most of the objections lay on the surface, but not so most of the benefits; many of the latter requiring, for their knowledge and appreciation, a full acquaintance with the intricate machinery of the Post Office.

So far, however, as I could judge, the public preferred an immediate termination of the experiment to the possible advantages that might arise from its continuance; and, acting on this belief, I advised accordingly. A full statement of the reasons which induced me to issue the order in question will be found in the Appendix, page 43.

Manifold writer.

Much advantage has been obtained of late in registering letters by the use of the manifold writer. By this improvement, which was suggested by Mr. West, Chief Clerk of the Mail Office, the time and labour required have been reduced by one quarter, persons bringing letters for registration have been more quickly released, and greater security has been obtained against error.

Post Office Library and Literary Association.

It is with much pleasure that I have witnessed the establishment, among the clerks of the Chief Office in London, of an institution called the Post Office Library and Literary Association. The large number of clerks who have enrolled their names shows how general among them are a taste for reading and a desire for mental cultivation and pleasures of a superior kind. Besides much support within the Department, the institution has received many liberal donations, both of money and books, from without,—among others, a munificent gift of 50*l.* from His Royal Highness the Prince Consort.

When this association shall have been some time established and be able to afford useful experience, I hope to see a similar institution, adapted to the different circumstances, arise among the letter carriers.

Book post.

Complaint is sometimes made that valuable books in their conveyance by post are injured. On this point I would remark, that the main duty of the Department being the prompt and rapid transmission of letters, the bags are made up in great haste, and are unavoidably subjected to rough usage in their transfer to and from the several carriages by which they are in succession conveyed; a transfer effected, in some instances, even while the train is in progress.

This rough usage is harmless as regards letters, and rarely injures any book packets; but it does sometimes happen that a book with an ornamental binding, or a volume which is thin in proportion to its other dimensions, is damaged by the friction or pressure of the other contents of the bag, unless protected by being carefully packed between stiff boards. Books of this class,

except when thus protected, should be transmitted by other means than the Post Office.

Groundless complaints.

Chiefly with a view of putting the public on their guard against different kinds of fraud, and of showing an occasional liability to error, when making even precise statements, from the tendency of the mind to record an intention as if it were an accomplished fact, a selection has again been given in the Appendix, page 48, from a number of complaints which, so far as this Department is concerned, were, on examination, found to be groundless.

I have the honour to be, my Lords,

Your Lordships' obedient Servant,

COLCHESTER.

General Post Office,
7th April 1859.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX (A.)

ESTIMATED NUMBER of CHARGEABLE LETTERS delivered in the UNITED KINGDOM in the Year immediately preceding the first general Reduction of Postage on the 5th Day of December 1839, and in the Years subsequent thereto; also (in the first Year) the Number of Franks.

Year ending 31st December.	Delivered in England and Wales.						Total in England and Wales.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in Ireland.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in Scotland.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Total in United Kingdom.	Increase per cent. per annum.
	By Country Offices.	Increase per cent. per annum.	In London District, exclusive of Local Letters.	Increase per cent. per annum.	Local Letters in London District.	Increase per cent. per annum.								
Estimated No. of letters, 1839	—	—	—	—	13,000,000	—	59,983,000	—	8,302,000	—	7,623,000	—	75,908,000	—
Estimated No. of Franks, 1839	—	—	—	—	—	—	5,172,000	—	1,055,000	—	336,000	—	6,563,000	—
Estimated No. of letters, 1840	88,071,000	—	23,560,000	—	20,372,000	—	132,003,000	120	18,211,000	119¼	18,554,000	143½	168,768,000	122¼
Average of 5 years, 1841–45 -	121,708,000	10¾	31,587,000	9	25,838,000	8¾	179,133,000	10¼	24,226,000	9½	24,419,000	9¼	227,777,000	10
„ „ 1846–50 -	179,651,000	5½	44,089,000	5½	34,883,000	5½	258,622,000	5½	34,757,000	5	33,627,000	4¼	327,006,000	5
„ „ 1851–55 -	232,569,000	6½	54,043,000	5¾	43,168,000	3¾	329,783,000	6	39,384,000	3½	40,999,000	5¼	410,166,000	5¾
Estimated No. of letters, 1856	275,454,000	4¾	64,961,000	9	47,895,000	4½	388,310,000	5¼	41,851,000	Nil.	48,233,000	5	478,394,000	4¾
„ „ 1857	291,636,000	5¾	66,233,000	2	52,134,000	8¾	410,003,000	5½	42,806,000	2¼	51,612,000	7	504,421,000	5½
„ „ 1858	300,506,000	3	68,961,000	4	58,404,000	12	427,871,000	4¼	44,208,000	3¼	50,795,000	1½ Dec.	522,874,000	3¾

APPENDIX (B.)

ESTIMATED NUMBER of BOOK PACKETS and CHARGEABLE NEWSPAPERS* delivered in the UNITED KINGDOM in the Years 1856, 1857 and 1858.

Year ending 31st December.	Delivered in England and Wales.						Total in England and Wales.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Ireland.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Scotland.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in United Kingdom.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.
	By Country Offices.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	In London District, exclusive of Local Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.	Local Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers in London District.	Increase per cent. on the previous Year.								
Estimated No. of Book Packets and Chargeable Newspapers - 1856	12,386,000	—	1,197,000	—	1,904,000	—	15,487,000	—	1,766,000	—	2,996,000	—	20,249,000	—
„ „ 1857	15,386,000	24¼	1,405,000	17½	2,495,000	31	19,286,000	24½	2,284,000	29½	3,623,000	21	25,193,000	24½
„ „ 1858	17,573,000	14¼	1,919,000	36½	2,567,000	3	22,059,000	14½	2,525,000	10½	3,800,000	5	28,384,000	12¾

* By "Chargeable Newspapers" are meant Newspapers not bearing the impressed newspaper stamp, and the postage of which is consequently paid in postage stamps or money.

APPENDIX (C.)

Estimated Number of Free Newspapers* delivered in the United Kingdom in the Years 1856, 1857 and 1858.

Year ending 31st December.	Delivered in England and Wales.				Total in England and Wales.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Ireland.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in Scotland.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	Total in United Kingdom.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.
	By Country Offices.	Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.	In London District.	Increase or Decrease per cent. on the previous Year.								
Estimated Number of Free Newspapers - 1856	31,423,000	—	4,425,000	—	35,848,000	—	10,066,000	—	7,876,000	—	53,790,000	—
„ „ 1857	30,547,000	2¾	4,456,000	¾ Inc.	35,003,000	2¼	9,368,000	7	7,245,000	8	51,616,000	4
„ „ 1858	29,714,000	2¾	4,404,000	1¼ Dec.	34,118,000	2½	9,236,000	1½	6,704,000	7½	50,058,000	3

* By "Free Newspapers" are meant all British Newspapers and Publications bearing the *impressed newspaper stamp*, and all newspapers from abroad upon which no charge has to be made in this Country.

APPENDIX (D.)

NUMBER and AMOUNT of MONEY ORDERS ISSUED and PAID in the UNITED KINGDOM, during the last Twenty Years.

MONEY ORDERS ISSUED.

Year.	England and Wales.		Ireland.		Scotland.		Total, United Kingdom.	
	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.
		£		£		£		£
1839	142,723	240,063	30,015	47,295	16,183	25,765	188,921	313,124
1840	482,764	802,827	53,507	77,167	51,526	80,980	587,797	960,975
Average of Five Years, 1841–45	2,020,977	4,211,885	198,785	339,433	210,093	385,936	2,429,855	4,937,256
„ „ 1846–50	3,365,969	6,688,684	347,547	585,151	374,187	680,696	4,087,703	7,954,533
„ „ 1851–55	4,393,045	8,488,175	407,608	683,277	418,906	769,863	5,219,559	9,941,316
1856	5,231,736	10,099,366	461,723	806,942	485,523	899,253	6,178,982	11,805,562
1857	5,417,203	10,410,863	459,625	818,537	512,875	950,873	6,389,703	12,180,273
1858	5,674,441	10,821,901	485,220	857,558	529,735	982,646	6,689,396	12,662,105

In 1840 the commission on Money Orders was reduced as follows:—
For any sum not exceeding 2*l.*, from 6*d.* to 3*d.*
For any sum above 2*l.*, and not exceeding 5*l.*, from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*

APPENDIX (D.)—*continued.*

MONEY ORDERS PAID.

Year.	England and Wales.		Ireland.		Scotland.		Total, United Kingdom.	
	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.
		£		£		£		£
1839	124,004	208,586	47,022	71,426	17,609	31,715	188,615	311,727
1840	429,600	739,963	89,388	120,950	50,900	83,372	569,888	944,287
Average of Five Years, 1841–45	1,972,625	4,163,991	232,346	356,083	211,425	405,320	2,416,396	4,925,396
„ „ 1846–50	3,260,108	6,600,193	478,361	681,997	345,402	665,185	4,083,871	7,947,377
„ „ 1851–55	4,255,830	8,353,431	537,836	772,138	421,161	809,492	5,214,827	9,935,063
1856	5,112,917	9,913,187	562,949	909,361	496,276	971,108	6,172,142	11,793,656
1857	5,333,979	10,281,663	537,881	893,789	515,563	1,002,857	6,387,423	12,178,309
1858	5,585,742	10,685,566	553,177	920,748	539,618	1,040,182	6,678,537	12,646,496

In 1840 the commission on Money Orders was reduced as follows:—
For any sum not exceeding 2*l.*, from 6*d.* to 3*d.*
For any sum above 2*l.*, and not exceeding 5*l.*, from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*

APPENDIX (E.)

AMOUNT of MONEY ORDERS ISSUED and PAID at the undermentioned Towns during the Years 1857 and 1858.

OFFICES.	1857.		1858.	
	Issues.	Payments.	Issues.	Payments.
ENGLAND.	£	£	£	£
Bath	63,284	63,458	66,225	64,628
Birmingham	182,744	305,661	178,192	327,462
Bradford, Yorkshire	45,874	43,599	46,073	47,261
Brighton	97,558	83,725	105,324	87,699
Bristol	124,666	204,022	127,640	210,984
Cambridge	35,208	38,409	36,694	39,181
Cardiff	51,473	22,371	55,203	25,715
Cheltenham	52,499	41,562	53,863	42,699
Chester	37,605	43,967	37,434	43,435
Derby	45,327	40,228	46,290	40,103
Devonport	34,831	32,838	36,883	31,449
Exeter	44,030	57,992	44,749	58,785
Gloucester	31,170	31,667	31,835	33,729
Halifax	31,339	25,784	32,997	27,059
Huddersfield	30,946	28,801	32,022	31,453
Hull	82,467	109,671	84,805	115,870
Ipswich	33,085	30,329	35,092	31,992
Leeds	98,969	135,199	102,900	144,924
Leicester	46,916	48,101	47,668	49,847
Liverpool	364,472	367,068	361,495	377,438
London	1,684,524	3,016,547	1,793,147	3,129,649
Manchester	278,506	380,550	290,154	386,532
Newcastle-on-Tyne	100,018	84,879	96,055	92,444
Newport, Monmouth	38,603	20,743	39,345	22,724
Northampton	33,176	23,538	35,555	25,525
Norwich	44,906	57,865	45,603	59,534
Nottingham	76,995	69,503	74,452	74,772
Oxford	40,181	42,902	40,639	43,374
Plymouth	62,395	64,936	62,631	66,232
Portsmouth	74,466	62,541	75,644	60,178
Preston	40,412	36,237	39,931	37,397
Reading	27,346	32,263	30,171	34,947
Sheffield	86,778	93,959	85,005	98,068
Shrewsbury	39,916	25,962	41,706	28,346
Southampton	70,974	66,394	67,319	65,557
Sunderland	65,456	37,128	64,703	37,245
Swansea	38,856	26,020	40,517	27,527
Wolverhampton	50,355	33,919	49,228	35,798
Worcester	36,164	33,398	36,924	34,444
Yarmouth, Norfolk	23,665	36,953	24,734	40,329
York	54,446	56,279	55,031	57,917
IRELAND.				
Belfast	40,946	45,693	41,881	49,714
Cork	31,213	34,633	31,289	35,580
Dublin	274,905	217,846	285,297	227,927
SCOTLAND.				
Aberdeen	33,451	42,720	35,966	42,756
Dundee	33,660	29,659	33,019	30,277
Edinburgh	132,635	210,329	138,078	215,896
Glasgow	164,920	200,024	162,041	216,965

APPENDIX (F.)

Gross Revenue, Cost of Management, and Net Revenue of the Post Office of the United Kingdom, for the last 22 Years.

Year.	Gross Revenue.[a]	Cost of Management.	Net Revenue.	Postage charged on Government Departments.
	£	£	£	£
1837 - - -	2,339,737	687,313	1,652,424	38,528
1838 [b] - - -	2,346,278	686,768	1,659,510	45,156
1839 [c] - - - -	2,390,763	756,999	1,633,764	44,277
1840 [d] - - - -	1,359,466	858,677	500,789	90,761
Average of Five Years, 1841—45	1,658,214	1,001,405	656,809	112,468
„ „ 1846—50	2,143,717	1,304,772	838,944	110,798
„ „ 1851—55	2,569,836	1,441,334	1,128,502	157,093
1856 - - - - -	2,867,954	1,660,229	1,207,725	154,229
1857 - - - -	3,035,713	1,720,815	1,314,898	135,517
1858 - - - - -	3,087,535	1,926,108	1,161,427	138,631

[a] Namely, the Gross Receipts after deducting the Returns for "Refused Letters," &c.

[b] 1838 was the last complete year before the general reduction of postage.

[c] On 5th December 1839, the maximum Inland Postage for a single letter was reduced to 4*d.*

[d] On 10th January 1840 the postage on all inland letters weighing not more than ½ oz. was reduced to a uniform charge of one penny.

APPENDIX (G.)

AMOUNT of Postage (including Postage Stamps sold by the Post Office and by the Office of Inland Revenue) during the Years 1857 and 1858, at those Towns in the United Kingdom where the Amount was largest.

	1857.	1858.
ENGLAND.	£	£
Bath	15,215	15,795
Birmingham	42,107	42,666
Bradford, Yorkshire	13,250	13,644
Brighton	—	19,430
Bristol	31,264	31,946
Cheltenham	10,503	10,708
Exeter	12,630	12,976
Hull	18,803	18,284
Leeds	23,844	24,206
Liverpool	104,865	103,949
London	833,952*	851,912†
Manchester	89,765	89,045
Newcastle-on-Tyne	21,909	21,648
Norwich	12,161	12,444
Nottingham	12,572	12,336
Plymouth	10,569	10,803
Sheffield	16,565	16,855
Southampton	12,219	12,856
York	11,132	11,715
IRELAND.		
Belfast	15,547	16,042
Cork	11,915	12,161
Dublin	60,391	62,359
SCOTLAND.		
Aberdeen	12,274	13,283
Edinburgh	59,177	63,971
Glasgow	68,877	66,888

* Including 135,517*l.* for postage charged to Government Departments.

† Including 138,631*l.* for postage charged to Government Departments.

APPENDIX (H.)

Medical Officer's Report for the Year 1858.

Medical Department,
General Post Office, 5th March 1859.

Sir,

I have now the honour of presenting this, my Fourth Annual Report on the health of the Officers of this Department.

Number of Officers under Medical Charge.

Class B.—Clerks, Inspectors, &c., having salaries not exceeding 150*l.*, 308.

Class C.—Sorters, Letter Carriers, Messengers, &c. 1167.

In addition to these two classes (comprising together 1475 officers), heads of departments, clerks, and other officers, whose salaries exceed 150*l.* per annum. (of whom there are 247), have the privilege of official medical care in cases of illness at the office, or during epidemics.

Candidates examined.

Clerks.—53 candidates for clerkships presented themselves for medical examination. Of these 2 were rejected.

Minor Establishment.—The number of candidates for the office of letter carrier was 451. The large number of 132, or 29 per cent., of these were found to be physically disqualified.

Previous Occupations of the Candidates.

I have drawn up the following table of the previous occupations of 383 of the candidates, to show from what classes of the community the minor establishment is principally drawn.

Domestic and other servants	60
Porters and messengers	57
Clerks in counting houses	24
Grocers and cheesemongers	18
Shoemakers	17
Book-binders and printers	16
Bakers	14
Carpenters	13
Gardeners	12
Tailors	12
Country letter carriers	10
Labourers	10
Drapers' shopmen	9
Plumbers and painters	9
Butchers	8
Smiths	7
Cabinet makers	7
Soldiers and sailors	5
Schoolmasters	5
Policemen	5
Masons and bricklayers	4
Saddlers	4
Worker in metals	4

Weavers	3
Turners	3
Omnibus conductors	2
Watch-makers	2
Chemists	2
Publicans	2
Photographers	2
Various	37
	383

It is much to be desired that a greater number of young men accustomed to rural and agricultural pursuits, than the Table shows to be now applicants for the appointment, could be induced to become candidates. The previous employments of the majority do not fit them well for the active duties of a letter carrier. A glance at the list will show how few have been accustomed to sharp active exercise, and to lift, without considerable effort, the required weights.

The Table will of itself point out, to any one accustomed to observe the hygienic effects of certain trades and occupations on health, the reason of so large a proportion as nearly 30 per cent. being found to be unfit for the duties of the office.

I alluded to this subject in my Report for the year 1857.

General Health.

The general health of the establishment, as shown by the number of separate cases of illness is again satisfactory. In 1856, among 1,500 officers, there had occurred 1,771 cases of illness, or 118 per cent.; in 1857, among 1,700 officers, 1,403 cases, or 82 per cent., while in the year just elapsed, among 1,475 employés, the attacks had decreased to 1,176, or 79 per cent.

The following Table shows the number of officers who presented themselves for official medical assistance during the year, specifying a few of the more common complaints.

	Clerks.	Others.	Total.	Diarrhœa.	Rheumatism.	Carbuncle.	Cynanche.
January	14	112	126	3	10	3	5
February	9	81	90	3	11	3	6
March	9	91	100	6	10	5	6
April	2	60	62	1	2	1	4
May	18	78	96	5	8	1	11
June	12	95	107	16	5	3	12
July	12	92	104	17	8	3	7
August	15	96	111	21	4	3	4
September	13	82	95	9	4	1	3
October	10	86	96	9	4	1	8
November	6	88	94	3	2	3	7
December	21	74	95	3	6	1	8
	141	1,035	1,176	96	74	28	81

323 visits were paid to officers at their own dwellings, when too ill to attend at the office.

Epidemics.

We have been particularly free from epidemics during the past year. Although the summer was much hotter than usual, and the river Thames held its sewage in a highly concentrated form, partly from the great evaporation caused by the high temperature, and partly from the diminished rain-fall, producing a few severe attacks among the officers whose duties brought them more immediately in contact with its emanations, the cases of diarrhœa fell from 215 in 1857 to 96 during the past year. There have been two or three cases of the epidemic throat disease, known as diphtheria, among the letter carriers, but these were cut short by appropriate active treatment on the first invasion of the disease.

In the treatment of this, as in cholera, and some other epidemic diseases, saving of time is almost equivalent to saving of life.

Absence from Duty caused by Illness.

Clerks.

In the year 1857 the average absence from duty from illness in classes A. and B. amounted to 10½ days for each officer. During the past year, this amount had fallen to 9 days. As the number of officers in these two classes was 555, it follows that a number of days equal to 140 weeks of illness was saved to the clerks of the Department in 1858, compared with the preceding year.

Minor Establishment.

The total amount of absence from duty on account of ill health in class C. was 10,287 days among 1,167 officers, making a general average of rather less than 9 days per man. During the previous year, which was by no means unhealthy, the average absence from illness in this class was 10 days. Without explanation, it would appear that an average absence of 9 days in the year, caused by illness, of every officer in so large a department as the Post Office is extremely high. This explanation consists in the fact, that of the total number of 13,891 days of absence among the officers of all classes, more than one-third, viz., 4,571, were caused by the illness of only 30 of the officers. Some of these have now been superannuated, and others are about to be so. If allowance be made for these exceptional 30 cases of prolonged illness, the average absence, from this cause, of all the other officers will be reduced to 5½ days each.

Immunity from Illness of some of the Officers.

2045 officers have been attached to the Chief Office during some portion of the year. Of this number, 735 have been off duty for a time through illness, while nearly two-thirds entirely escaped illness of sufficient gravity to necessitate their absence. During the previous year, the number of officers who were entirely free from such illness was less by 25 per cent.

DEATHS IN CLASSES A. and B.

(*Clerks, Inspectors, &c.*)

Nature of Disease.	Age at Death.			
	Between 30 and 40.	Between 40 and 50.	Between 50 and 60.	Between 60 and 70.
Heart - - -	1	—	—	1
Brain - - -	1	—	1	—
Lungs and Stomach -	1	—	—	—
Suicide - - -	—	1	—	—
Total - -	3	1	1	1

As these six deaths took place among a body of 555 officers, the average mortality would be at the rate of 11 per 1,000. This will, however, be reduced to 9,—the same death ratio which showed itself in this class in the previous year,—if we deduct one death, caused not by disease, but suicide.

DEATHS IN MINOR ESTABLISHMENT, CLASS C.

Disease.	Age at death.				
	Between 20 and 30.	Between 30 and 40.	Between 40 and 50.	Between 50 and 60.	Total.
Consumption - -	2	4	—	2	8
Bronchitis - - -	—	—	1	1	2
Disease of Stomach -	—	1	—	—	1
Typhus - - -	—	—	1	—	1
Ulceration of Bowels -	1	—	—	—	1
Psoas Abscess - -	—	—	1	—	1
Paralysis - - -	—	1	—	—	1
Cancer - - -	—	—	1	—	1
Burning - - -	1	—	—	—	1
Total - -	4	6	4	3	17

As the number of officers among whom these 17 deaths occurred was 1,167, the death ratio was about 14·5 per 1000. One of the casualties was not caused by illness, but by fire. This death rate is (in common with that of the whole kingdom) higher than that of the previous year, which was then only 11 per 1000; but even this ratio of 14·5 per 1000 stands out in high relief, when contrasted with the annual average mortality of males in London, aged 20 and upwards, viz., 24·2 per 1000.

Superannuations.

During the year, 29 officers have been pensioned on account of ill health or old age.

The causes of their retirement from the service were the following:—

Impaired or lost vision	6
Affections of the brain and nervous system	5
General debility	2
Disease of the lungs	5
„ „ heart	2
„ „ kidneys	1
„ „ stomach	1
Fracture of knee-bone	1
Stone in the bladder	1
Old age	2
Ulcerated legs	1
Rheumatic gout	1

The age of the youngest was 39, that of the oldest 68. Their average age at the period of retirement, was 53½.

Besides these, three have retired on gratuities.

Length of Service.

This averaged 29 years, the shortest was 16½ years the longest 45.

Of the 32 officers who have been superannuated, or who have retired on gratuities, during the year, five were clerks, and 27 belonged to the minor establishment. About half were attached to the District, and half to the Chief Office.

Removable Causes of Disease.

The Returned Letter Office is now so well ventilated, and the gas products so completely carried off by the system of gas sewers in operation there, that I see no room for further improvement.

The large Sorting Offices, however, are not in so satisfactory a state, though they are well supplied with fresh air, continually forced in by means of the fan of the steam-engine, now adapted for that purpose by Mr. Cowper, C.E. No alteration has yet been made in the system of lighting, nor are there any means in operation for carrying off the unconsumed gas. This is constantly escaping from the numerous burners, exposed as they are to frequent and strong draughts of air.*

This gas, mixed as it is with carbonic acid, carbonic oxide, and sulphurous acid (the latter, by absorption of atmospheric oxygen, quickly becoming oil of vitriol), cannot be otherwise than injurious to the delicate breathing organs of those exposed to its fumes.

It has been found that the thickest and toughest leathers, when subjected to the action of these gases in libraries, become in a short time destroyed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) Waller Lewis, M.B., Cantab.,
F.G.S., F.S.A., &c.,
Foreign Secretary, Epidemiological Society.

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* This matter has been long under consideration, and experiments have been tried, but there are peculiar difficulties regarding these rooms which it has not hitherto been practicable to surmount.

APPENDIX (I.)

To the London Letter Carriers.

General Post Office, 29th September, 1858.

I am directed by the Postmaster-General to express his Lordship's disapprobation of the proceedings, as reported in some of the newspapers, of a recent meeting held by a portion of your body in the South-Western District.

You are well aware that should any case of grievance exist, the Rules of the Department point out a proper mode of representing it; that any one not satisfied with the result of his application may, through his immediate official superior, send a written statement of his case to the Postmaster-General; and that no obstacle of any kind is ever offered to your meeting, in a proper manner, on any matter connected with your interests as a body.

You know also that complaints thus made, stated respectfully and without wilful or gross misrepresentation, whether emanating from a meeting or from individuals, never bring upon any one either loss of position, delay in promotion, or any other disadvantage.

Nevertheless, instead of the regular course being adopted, and the proceedings conducted in an open, manly, and respectful manner, the meeting referred to was held away from the ordinary place of employment, and speeches were made containing statements which the men who uttered them must have known to be false, but from the consequences of which they endeavoured to screen themselves by concealing their names.

The Postmaster-General holds every man who was present at that meeting, especially those who took an active part, responsible for its proceedings; and he warns all others not to follow an example tending to subvert discipline, to impede the public service, and to bring disgrace and dismissal on those concerned.

Lord Colchester has the satisfaction of believing that the great majority of letter carriers are well-disposed, industrious, and respectable men, who would take no part in such unjustifiable proceedings; and he believes that the actors in them are in many cases among the least meritorious officers, and who, therefore, are moved by a natural antipathy to the new arrangement which makes merit the ground of promotion.

His Lordship also warns the letter carriers against the machinations of discarded officers, who, reckless of the ruin they may bring upon others, strive to spread disaffection in the Department from which they themselves have been removed.

That the situation of letter carrier is far from being ineligible, is shown by the large number of respectable men constantly applying for appointment; a fact at which the Postmaster-General cannot be surprised, when he compares the amount of work and rate of wages with those to be found in ordinary employments. Excepting auxiliaries, who are employed during part of their time only, the lowest wages of any London letter carrier (these being obtainable by a youth of seventeen—often the son of an elder letter carrier) are 19*s.* a-week, advancing, with every year's good service, to 23*s.*; while those who are willing and able to become sorters, may rise into classes receiving from 25*s.* to 30*s.* a-week, from 32*s.* to 38*s.*, and from 40*s.* to 50*s.*; though some of you appear unwilling to become regular sorters, since that

office entails the loss of the Christmas boxes (averaging, it is believed, more than 8*l.* a-year, and in some walks exceeding even 20*l.*) which are given to letter carriers.

His Lordship reminds you that these wages are exclusive of your uniform, of a pension in old age, and of assistance in insuring your lives. A large number of you, also, are gratuitously supplied with medical attendance and medicine. Lastly, you have each a fortnight's holiday in the year, which most other working men must either forego or purchase by the loss of a fortnight's wages. Neither should it be forgotten, that several of the foregoing advantages have been granted recently, and that without solicitation, having proceeded from a spontaneous desire for your welfare.

As regards work, you know that more than two years ago you were all informed that, if, after allowing for temporary circumstances caused by changes in the walks, any letter carrier thought his duties were more than a man of ordinary despatch might be expected to get through in an average of eight hours per day, he was at liberty to report his case for consideration. But few applications, nevertheless, have been received; and even in nearly all these few cases, including, with one exception, those recently submitted to the Postmaster-General by a deputation from some of your body, it was found, on careful examination, that the daily working time, instead of exceeding eight hours, was actually less.

On a late occasion, I was authorized by the Postmaster-General to state, that provided the body of letter carriers conducted themselves in all respects with propriety, his Lordship would be prepared to take a fitting opportunity to look at the question with the view of ascertaining whether it might not be possible to submit to the Treasury some scheme by which the position and prospects of the letter carriers could be improved, without their being required to qualify themselves for the duties of regular sorters.

Progress has been made towards performing this conditional promise; and even for ascertaining whether, with due regard to the public service, the situation of letter carrier might be improved in any other way; but I am now directed to state, that if any repetition shall take place of the improper acts mentioned above, the Postmaster-General, looking to the necessity for maintaining perfect discipline in so large a body of men, will be reluctantly obliged to suspend all progress of the kind; and that, but for the conviction that the misconduct has been confined to comparatively few men, his Lordship would have felt it his duty at once to take much more stringent measures.

WILLIAM BOKENHAM,
Controller of the Circulation Department.

TO THE LONDON LETTER CARRIERS.

November, 1858.

I AM directed by the Postmaster-General to inform you that his Lordship has received authority from the Lords of the Treasury to make the following alterations with regard to the appointment, pay, and promotion of the London letter carriers, and other members of the Fourth Class.

1. In future, when vacancies occur among the letter carriers of the Third Class, such letter carriers as are also "Charge Takers" (and fully competent for that office), and as are not already in the Third Class, will be promoted to it in the order of merit, without requiring

that they should become sorters; but, with this exception, no more letter carriers will as such be promoted to the Third Class, and all future vacancies which may arise among the letter carriers now in that class will not be filled up.

2. The scale of wages for the Fourth Class, which at present commences at 19*s.* per week, and rises by an annual increment of 1*s.* to 23*s.*, will, as regards all future appointments, commence at 18*s.*, but will rise, by the same annual increment, to 25*s.*

3. Men now in the service will continue to advance on the present scale till they reach 23*s.* a week; but instead of remaining at 23*s.* (the maximum of that scale), they will, after six years' service (dating from their being placed on the establishment), advance to 24*s.*, provided they shall have stood at wages of 23*s.* as much as one year. Having served another year at wages of 24*s.*, they will advance to 25*s.*, the maximum of the new scale. A service of six years is required to entitle a man to advance to 24*s.*, because, under the new scale, it will require six years to reach that point.

4. Those who have already served six years in all (dating from their being placed on the establishment), and at least one year at wages of 23*s.* a week, will be at once advanced to 24*s.*, and a year hence will be further advanced to 25*s.* a week.

5. By the old scale (that in use before the revision in 1854) the 60 senior general post letter carriers (a distinction which, as you know, then existed) were entitled to 30*s.* each per week; and a further number of 110 to 25*s.*; and it has been arranged that of the old general post letter carriers still in the service (whatever may be their present class), such as are receiving less than they would have had under the old scale shall henceforward receive the wages which, under the old scale, they would have enjoyed. This will at once advance every such letter carrier (now receiving less) either to 25*s.* or 30*s.*; and as vacancies occur in the 30*s.* class, they will be filled up by the admission (according to seniority) of other old general post letter carriers, so long as any remain in the service.

6. In like manner also, under the old system, 141 of the senior London district letter carriers received wages of 25*s.* a week; and it has been settled that, as regards all men now in the service who were district letter carriers at the time of the revision, this regulation shall be re-established. Consequently, such of the 141 senior London district letter carriers still in the service (whatever may be their present class) as are now receiving less than 25*s.* a week will be at once advanced to that amount; and as vacancies occur in the 25*s.* class, they will be filled up by the admission (according to seniority) of other old London district letter carriers, so long as any remain who were in the service at the time of the revision.

7. It is, of course, intended that all advancement herein authorized shall, as heretofore, depend on every man's good conduct, and on the efficient discharge of his duties.

8. At present men sometimes enter the service beyond the age for which the lowest wages are calculated, and with the burden of a family upon them. Such men are objectionable, not only because a man who has incurred responsibilities beyond his income is likely to be uneasy, dissatisfied, and a bad officer, but because the difficulty of training a person to the rapid and efficient discharge of the duties of letter carrier and sorter is greatly increased if at the commencement he is past the age of youth. To remedy this evil it has been determined that every new letter carrier to be appointed must be under twenty-one years of age.

9. The wages for the current week will be paid, in accordance with the foregoing arrangements, on Saturday next, December 4th.

10. Arrangements, as you are aware, have for some time been in progress for changing the hour of the last collection of letters from ten o'clock to nine; and it is under consideration whether some improvement may not be made in the mode of appointing letter carriers to their different walks.

11. I am directed to express the satisfaction which Lord Colchester feels at being thus enabled to fulfil the expectations held out by him to the general body of letter carriers, of improving their condition; and to state that his Lordship is glad to find that, although some few letter carriers have been led by bad advisers into acts which have brought punishment upon them, the general body have placed a just confidence in his word, and have shown that they did not participate in the late discreditable system of agitation.

WILLIAM BOKENHAM,
Controller of the Circulation Department.

APPENDIX (J.)

PREPAYMENT OF LETTERS.

General Post Office, 21st February 1859.

COMPULSORY prepayment of letters was a part of the original plan of Penny Postage; my object being to simplify accounts, and accelerate both the sorting and despatch of letters, but most of all their delivery from house to house. As a temporary measure, however, to allow opportunity for change of habit, I suggested the arrangement which subsisted until the 10th of this month.

Indeed, about the time when the plan was promulgated, compulsory prepayment was in actual use as respects all letters sent abroad, whether to foreign countries or our own colonies, except such of the latter as were under the control of the Postmaster-General; and though, during a subsequent period, the Post Office authorities made arrangements with several Governments, foreign or colonial, for allowing an option in this respect, yet the inconvenience thence arising, both to the Department and the public, proved eventually to be so serious, that it has now, for a considerable time, been our constant aim (the demand in some instances coming from abroad) to re-establish and complete the arrangements for compulsory prepayment of transmarine letters. Indeed, the vast increase in the bulk of these mails, particularly those from Australia, rendered compulsory prepayment of the Inward Mails almost a matter of necessity. It may be easily imagined that the disposal of 80,000 letters suddenly arriving, in addition to the ordinary work of the office, could not be so provided for, as to prevent delay in their delivery, without the use of all practicable means for simplifying operations.

To illustrate this, it will suffice to say, that when a mail brings a mass of unpaid letters, there is first, to verify the postage charge raised against the Central Office by each of the offices abroad which contributes a separate bag; that, secondly, the charge thus made against the Central Office requires that office to make a corresponding charge against every post office at home or abroad to which it despatches a bag; these, in turn, having to make similar charges against the sub-

offices; and all offices, whether principal or subordinate, having to repeat the process against the letter carriers; so that, supposing the mail to bring an unpaid letter for each letter carrier in the country, there would be at least 20,000 accounts to be thus made out. And, with every allowance for aggregation of letters in certain districts to the relief of others, an Australian mail, consisting as formerly principally of unpaid letters, would really make some approach to this vast ramification of accounts. It is obvious that the making out and checking of all these accounts, and the collection of the postage from house to house, must involve not only trouble and expense to the Department, but serious delay in the despatch of the letters to the several towns, and in their delivery to the public.

Nor is this all, for, in addition to the labour implied in the settlement of the numerous accounts thus made out, other accounts arise from the rejection, on presentation, of a considerable portion of these unpaid letters, the postage of which has to be charged back again, step by step, until the aggregate charge reaches the despatching colony, where the refused letters are opened, and an attempt, generally ineffectual, is made to recover the postage from the writers.

The delays described above would be reduced, though only in a slight degree, by the present practice of sorting on board the packet; but prepayment, though not absolutely necessary, is a great aid to the practice in question.

The advantage of eliminating, or even materially reducing, such enormous complexity is too obvious to need enforcement. And, indeed, the acquiescence of the public in the present arrangement, extending as it does to all the South American States, the East and West Indies, and the Australian Colonies, to say nothing of some minor States and Dependencies, is evidence that the advantage has not been too dearly purchased. It may be further observed, that much recent complaint would have been avoided had the compulsory arrangement extended to Hambro', from whence many persons have lately received unpaid letters of an annoying description.

The complexity and delays caused by unpaid inland letters are but little inferior to those described above.

In addition to numerous classes of Foreign and Colonial letters, prepayment has also, for a long time, been compulsory as respects some branches of Inland Correspondence; viz., all letters exceeding 4 oz. in weight; all registered letters; all late letters—i. e., all letters posted after the closing of the box, but intended for immediate despatch; and, finally, all letters passing through London on the Sunday.

The several classes, thus long subjected to compulsory prepayment, far exceed, in the aggregate number, that portion of the correspondence to which the rule has been recently extended, which is indeed surpassed by the Foreign and Colonial letters alone, and probably by one or two other classes taken severally.

Now, while it would be altogether inadmissible to resort to optional prepayment as regards the above-named classes of letters, it is obviously important, at once to the public and the Department, that all correspondence whatever should be subjected to a single rule. All anomalies tend of course to misconception, and this, when applied to letters going abroad, sometimes produces grave consequences. Thus a letter for Australia, if posted unpaid on the day of despatch, loses a whole month; and the only practicable way to guard against such disappointment, is to come, as soon as possible, to the simple rule of universal prepayment. This once recognized and carried into a habit,

omissions will doubtless become very rare. If the rule were to reject Letters on account of *imperfect* payment (as was formerly the case in relation to the majority of Foreign and Colonial letters, and is still unavoidable in some instances), disappointment, probably, would not be infrequent, owing to error as to the weight of the letter; but this trouble cannot arise where the payment of a single rate suffices for transmission—a rule which has already been carried out to a considerable extent, and which it is sought gradually to make, with some few necessary exceptions, universal.

But the above are by no means the only reasons for the recent change. Amongst the additional ones may be mentioned, the comparative security afforded to the public against the annoyance of having either to pay postage on communications which may be worthless, if not offensive, or to incur the risk of refusing a letter which it would be desirable to receive, a perplexity which has given rise to frequent complaint. Before the recent change, about 500 letters daily, refused as unpaid, came to the Dead Letter Office in London; and whilst the bulk of these were useless or offensive, yet amongst them there was always a considerable number which would have been received had their tenor been known. And though the letters so rejected in ignorance were, in common with all other refused letters, returned to their writers, and could of course be posted again with care as to prepayment, yet the necessary delay—including as it did the forwarding the letter to its address—was much greater than that which occurs under the new rule, which in its operation is so prompt, that in average cases the writer may re-post his letter so as to secure its delivery within 24 hours of the time when it would have been delivered had it been prepaid at first. Further, the rejected letter, being now returned without charge, is, of course, never refused by the original sender, and thus is never entirely lost—a thing of frequent occurrence under the old arrangement

It is confidently expected that when the public has become quite accustomed to the new rule, the number of letters opened as unpaid will actually be less than before the change. Even at first the daily number at the London Office (setting aside the valentines) was not more than about 1800 against 500 before the change; but short as is the time that has yet elapsed, it has already fallen to about 1,500, and is still on the decrease.

Objection has been raised to the new rule, on the ground that it interferes with the privacy of correspondence. If the above anticipation be realized (and it appears to be already realized in Ireland), the effect would obviously be of a reverse character. At all events, however, the difference thence arising will be but small—since the whole number of letters opened, from whatever cause, at the London "Dead Letter" Office, was previously as high as 6,000 daily—a number to which even the present augmentation bears but a small proportion.

In bringing the rule into operation, much care has been taken to prevent its introduction from pressing hardly in exceptional cases—for instance, letters posted in this country, which on being opened appear to have been written abroad or off the coast, are forwarded at once to their destination. Again, letters containing property are returned to their writers, not only without postage charge, but gratuitously registered. At the London Office, where all the dead letters for England and Wales are opened, both these precautions have been taken from the first. In Dublin and Edinburgh there may have been some little delay in adopting them.

I now proceed to state the objections which have been raised against the change, and at the same time to reply to them.

1st. Many persons, while admitting the soundness of the principle on which we have acted, urge, some that we ought to have given longer notice, so as to secure the prepayment of letters written abroad but posted in this country; others that we ought to have waited till the gum on the stamps had been made thoroughly adhesive. Our answer to the first class of objectors is, that, as a temporary arrangement, we have forwarded the few letters in question to their destinations, instead of returning them to the writers; and to the second class of objectors, that we *did* wait for the improvement of the gum, which is now, and has for some time been, excellent. What is really wanted, is care on the part of the public, either to use the embossed envelopes, or, when using adhesive stamps, to avoid highly glazed paper, to which even the best gum will not secure the stamp.

2nd. That letters written on board ship and posted by the pilots on landing cannot be prepaid. Here, too, as a temporary measure, the few letters in this class have, when opened, been at once forwarded as addressed; and this, in most cases, with little or no delay in their progress. After a time, the pilots will, no doubt, take money with the letters and obtain the necessary stamps at the Post Office (if they have not a sufficient supply of their own), before posting the letters. By these means, half the postage will be saved. Notices recommending this course have been placarded at the Ports.

3rd. That all persons may occasionally be without stamps. So also may they be without paper or pens and ink, but with this difference in favour of the stamps, viz., that they may be purchased at the Post Office where the letters must be sent. It is true that stamps are not sold on Sunday (except at certain hours), but the same rule, though without the exception, applies to the sheet of paper. Pillar Letter Boxes are an addition to the ordinary means of collection, and therefore need not be considered. I may add, that licence to sell postage stamps can be obtained gratuitously by all respectable persons, on application to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. And further, that "every "rural messenger is authorized to sell postage labels and stamped "envelopes at the same prices at which Postmasters are empowered to "sell them; and when any person applies to him for such labels, the "messenger must either supply them, or (if he have none in his pos-"session) he must, without extra charge, receive the postage in money, "and, on his arrival at the Post Office, obtain stamps for it, and affix "them carefully to the letters."

4th. Apprehensions have been expressed that bankers, in returning dishonoured bills or cheques, will incur serious responsibility, if the letter, owing to the stamp becoming detached, be not forwarded in the course of post. The reply to this is, that if any postage be paid, one penny, for instance, on a letter, however heavy, the letter is forwarded to its destination. If, therefore, bankers will only use the envelopes bearing the embossed penny stamp, making up the amount of postage, when it exceeds one penny, by the addition of adhesive stamps, they will be quite secure, even though the latter should become detached. Envelopes, however, of any size or form, may now be stamped so as to carry every variety of weight. Looking at the arrangement as a whole, the danger in question, so far from being increased, is really reduced. Hitherto the prepayment of packets, weighing more than four ounces, has been compulsory to the extent of three-fourths of the whole charge; and, under this rule, a packet

recently posted by an eminent city bank was actually stopped, though part of the postage was paid ; but under the new arrangement, which extends to the heavy as well as the lighter packets, a stoppage under similar circumstances will not occur. The chairman of the committee of bankers, who felt it his duty to make inquiries regarding the new rule, expressed his concurrence therein. I may add, that letters, any irregularity in the delivery of which would involve such serious consequences, should be registered.

5th. It is said that the new regulation will act very oppressively as regards the poor, especially the inmates of prisons and workhouses. Here, again, the difficulty of obtaining the stamp is similar to that of obtaining the paper, and will no doubt be met by similar means. The correspondence of the poor is generally with the poor ; and it cannot be to the advantage of the poor, as a class, that it should pay 2*d.* instead of 1*d.* for each letter. But whether addressed to the poor or the rich, unpaid letters ran no small chance of refusal, and then the writer himself became liable to the two-penny rate. The class of letters from prisons and workhouses must be small ; and, yet under the old rule, of this small class, no less than fifty per diem reached the London Dead Letter Office as refused on account of the postage; thus, to say the least, defeating the object the writer had in view. In all well-conducted prisons opportunities are afforded to the prisoners of obtaining money by work ; but whether in a prison or in a workhouse, if the few pence required by the inmates for their necessary correspondence cannot be obtained either from their own resources or from the allowances made for other unavoidable expenses, hundreds of charitable persons will gladly supply the necessary want.*

Amongst all the difficulties, then, which have been attributed to the new rule, there appear to be none which a little care or ingenuity may not surmount. Any change, however, is almost necessarily productive of temporary inconvenience and consequent dissatisfaction ; and as those who are benefitted are never so loud in the expression of their feeling as those who are or think themselves aggrieved, it is for some time always difficult to know what the real public feeling is. Perhaps no one of the great improvements effected within the last twenty years, has failed to elicit at least some expression of dissatisfaction; and occasionally complaints in the outset have been heavy. A case somewhat in point, has just occurred. An acceleration of the mails to and from the north, which has been effected with great labour, and which will probably raise the cost of conveyance by about 15,000*l.* a year, has secured to Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the greater part of Scotland, an increase of more than three hours in the time of replying to letters from the south. This improvement came into operation on the 1st instant. There can be no doubt that the public generally

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* Since the above was written, a letter has been received from the Governor of the County Prison at Hertford, from which an extract is subjoined.

"However, supposing the restrictive clauses to be fully carried out, I see no " reason, so far as relates to prisoners' letters, for impeding a public advantage ; the " remedy being simply the keeping a stock of postage stamps on hand (supplied from " donations or benefactions for the benefit of prisoners, or from the Governor's " private charity fund), to place on letters going out from prisoners who have no " money—a practice which I have always observed, and which has not cost (allowing " for stamps returned in answer from friends) more than five shillings a year."

"The value of the amount so charitably expended has been doubled, and will, in " future, be incalculably enhanced by the securing of the transmission of the letter " to friends who are mostly in circumstances of grief and poverty."

must welcome the change as a great benefit, and yet the only comments on the improvement which have reached us consist in complaints, some of these proceeding from residents in the two cities mainly benefited.

It must, therefore, be regarded as premature to come to any conclusion as to the eventual feeling of the public on the new rule of compulsory prepayment. The old plan was sufficiently fruitful in complaints, though certainly the new rule has, as yet, been more productive ; a fact referable, no doubt, in some degree, to its very novelty.

The new rule is, however, by no means without its active supporters. Several urgent communications have been received in its favour ; while the Press—if we count as advocates, as we fairly may, those papers which, while taking exception to the mode in which the rule was introduced, admit the soundness of the principle involved therein, and exclude from consideration those whose objections are founded on mistaken views of the facts of the case—does not appear to be very unequally divided on the question.

One very important circumstance in favour of the measure is, that experience has caused its establishment in several other countries ; in some of them even in a more stringent form. The rule has been adopted not only in Spain and the United States of America, but also with the possible exception of South Australia, in all the Australian Colonies.

As, however, time can only show what its real bearings are in this country, and as the advantages aimed at are great, it seems not unreasonable to ask that the experiment should be fairly tried. The Postmaster-General, through the Surveyors, has excellent opportunities of ascertaining the real effect upon the public,—information which of course will be properly applied,—and, if after all, it should be found that the advantages are too dearly purchased, and that it would be better to bear the inconveniences of the old plan, the rule will of course be withdrawn, as promised by the Secretary to the Treasury.

Lastly. If Parliament come to the conclusion that the public, for whose benefit the rule was intended, is suffering too much inconvenience from the change to warrant the further trial of the measure, I feel assured that the Postmaster-General will at once give effect to its wishes ; though I think it probable that the public would, after a time, regret that a regulation having so much to recommend it had been abandoned.

ROWLAND HILL.

APPENDIX (K.)

UNFOUNDED COMPLAINTS against the POST OFFICE respecting the LOSS of LETTERS.

Complaint was made that a letter, containing the halves of Bank of England notes for 65*l.*, sent to a firm in Liverpool, had failed to reach its destination. On inquiry, it appeared that the letter had been duly delivered, and subsequently stolen by a well known thief, who had the audacity to go and claim the corresponding half notes from another firm in Liverpool, to whose care the stolen letter showed they had been sent by the same post ; and in this object the scoundrel succeeded.

Had the letter been registered, so as to secure its going at once to the right hands, or had the precaution been taken not to send the second halves till an acknowledgment had been received of the first, this theft could not have been committed.

It having been complained that a letter, containing the halves of two 5*l.* notes and a sovereign, sent to a person in Liverpool, had failed to reach its destination, inquiry was made, when it appeared that the alleged senders of the letter were not able to produce the corresponding half notes, and that in truth no such letter had been forwarded.

A person complained repeatedly of letters addressed to him having been intercepted and tampered with, and of drafts having been stolen from them and negotiated. There being ground to suspect that the thief was in the complainant's own office, he reluctantly consented to test the honesty of his clerks, and the result showed that one of them was the guilty party, the man being subsequently tried and convicted. The thefts had been committed by means of a duplicate key, which gave the clerk access to the letter box.

A merchant complained of delay in the delivery of a letter sent by him, and his clerk persisted in stating that the letter had been duly posted ; but when the clerk was told that he would be required to attest the posting on oath before a magistrate, he acknowledged that he had put the letter into his pocket and had, for a time, forgotten it.

A person having applied for a missing letter, said to contain two 10*l.* and one 5*l.* Bank of England notes, and which he stated had been sent to him by his father, it appeared on inquiry that no such letter had been written, and he afterwards confessed that his object in asking for the letter was a device to keep in abeyance a pecuniary demand upon him by his landlady.

Several complaints having been made of the non-delivery of letters addressed to some privates in a Militia regiment, inquiries were instituted, and the result satisfied both the colonel of the regiment and the Department that the robberies had been committed after the letters had been delivered.

It having been stated that a letter, containing a "crest brooch," sent to an officer in garrison, had not been received, it was ascertained that the letter had been stolen by a sergeant who had been helping the "letter sergeant" to sort the letters for the garrison.

A barrister complained to the Department of the non-delivery of a letter, containing the halves of two 10*l.* Bank of England notes, stating that he had posted the letter himself ; but he shortly afterwards wrote to say that the letter had reached its destination. It appeared, that instead of putting it into the letter box, he had dropped the letter in the street, where fortunately it was picked up by some honest person, who posted it.

It was alleged that a letter, containing a cheque for 12*l.* 4*s.*, sent to a London firm, had not reached its destination. After a lapse of three months, the letter was found at a papier-mâché factory, to which it had evidently been sent among waste paper, after having been duly delivered.

A person complained of delay in the receipt of a letter which appeared to have passed through the Post Office twice. It transpired that the letter had, in the first instance, been duly delivered at a shop where it was to remain till called for; but that it had accidentally been taken away with some music, by a customer, who had afterwards dropped it in the street. Subsequently, the letter must have been picked up and again posted, and hence its double passage through the Post Office.

A person sent his daughter (a little girl) to one of the Branch Money Order Offices, in a large town, to obtain an order for 30*s*. She gave the money, wrapped up in a piece of paper, to the officer whose duty it was to receive it, but who, on examining the parcel, found only 25*s*. On the father being made aware of this circumstance, he proceeded to the Branch Office, insisted that the correct amount had been sent, and named the different coins of which he said it had been composed. He further insinuated that the parcel had been tampered with after its receipt by the officer. Two or three days afterwards however, the complainant confessed that the sum deficient (a crown piece) had been found in his own shop.

A person applied at the Leeds Post Office, and stated that two letters (one of which contained the half of a bank note), which he had himself posted at that office, had not reached their destination; mentioning at the same time some circumstances associated with the alleged posting of the letters. After some conversation, he was requested to produce the letter which had informed him of the non-receipt of the letters in question; but instead of producing it, he, to his own great astonishment, took from his pocket the very letters which he believed he had himself posted.

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